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Teaching with the Tools Kids Really Use

Author: Susan Brooks-Young

Teaching with the Tools Kids Really Use is a very interesting book to read. Susan Brooks-Young does a great job of explaining how different tools can be used to assist students in their education through technology. “The world is changing. Rapid advances in technology have changed the way services are provided and goods are manufactured. It’s difficult, if not impossible, to find an industry that has not changed because of these advances, and many people now have access to myriad goods and services that didn’t exist a decade ago” (Young-Brooks, 2010, p. 92). Mrs. Young uses this statement at the beginning of her book to focus the reader on how the world’s economy is constantly changing. With the rapidly changing workplace, we have to equip our students with tools that will prepare them for this changing environment. Employment opportunities that our children will have maybe drastically different than those of previous generations; therefore, we must prepare our children for providing goods and services to customers in a much different fashion. To accomplish this goal, administrators, teacher, and parents must work diligently to insure that the tools that our children are prepared for this change.

The pieces of hardware that Susan Brooks-Young focused on in this book were MP3 players, netbooks, and cell phones. “In 2006, 54% of all U.S. teens owned *at least* one MP3

player that they used more than 16 hours per week primarily to listen to music or watch video” (Young-Brooks, 2010, p. 307). With teens having access to digital media devices, educators can use this tool to assist students with their educations. Students can use MP3 players to listen to books, podcasts, as well as their favorite music to help them concentrate on the task at hand. Susan Brooks-Young brought to the forefront the use of netbooks in schools. Netbooks were developed to increase student interaction with computers by allowing schools to purchase them at a lower price for each student to use. By increasing children’s accessibility to technology, students would be able to use this tool at home and school. The use of cell phones in classrooms is another focus of this book. Administrators and teachers not allowing students to have cell phones with them at school was compared to how in the 20th century, students were watch for chewing gum. Mrs. Young suggests that we allow students to bring their cell phones to school at use them as a tool for their education. Students can be taught how to ethically handle themselves with this technological tool in public places, and use it during classes to send and receive information. These tools can offer additional support to educators as we embark into this digital world. We would better serve our students by allowing these tools than banning their use for education.

Mrs. Young also focused on using Web 2.0 tools in educating children. “Away from school, growing numbers of students are engaged in creating and publishing online content, gaming, and inhabiting virtual worlds. When asked their opinion, these students assert that the

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use of these tools in the classroom would make learning more relevant and interesting” (Young-Brooks, 2010, p. 512). By using the technology that our students are already involved in, we can enhance their understanding of the subject matter. Children enjoy manipulating information in different ways, and exploring how this information was conceived. Allowing our students different avenues through Web 2.0 applications is an excellent way to engage our digital generation.

I enjoyed reading this book. Susan Brooks-Young’s writing of this book demonstrates her understanding of what our students need from technology. She has inspired me to increase the amount of technology that I am using every day in my classroom. This is an excellent resource for administrators or teachers that are wanting to increase their knowledge of the digital world.

Reference:

Brooks-Young, S. (2010). Teaching with tools that kids really use. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin.

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